

IMPACT REPORT 2022

**SPIRIT
OF SUSSEX
AWARD**

US

UNIVERSITY
OF SUSSEX



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1. INTRODUCTION FROM THE AUTHORS



REBECCA

Welcome! The Spirit of Sussex Award team is excited to present our journey over the last 18 months. From launching in September 2020, the award scheme has now reached over 1,200 students who are actively participating and working towards their Spirit of Sussex Award.

Throughout this time, the Spirit of Sussex Award team has collaborated with colleagues across the institution, including the Institute of Development Studies and Brighton and Sussex Medical School to promote the award. Activities ranged from collaborating with the Careers and Employability Centre on welcome events, recognising co-curricular events and activities in Schools, to establishing links and creating meaningful networks. Spirit of Sussex Award connectors also regularly host award introduction sessions with student communities across the University including the Connector Programme, Widening Participation Ambassador scheme, Student Recruitment Ambassador scheme and clubs and societies within the Student Union.

Internal collaboration is integral to the success of the Spirit of Sussex Award, and we are thrilled to share the award's progression and achievements in our first impact report.

Here you will learn more about the focuses and experiences of Student Connectors working on the

award, including reflections on the award's launch right through to ratification and celebrating Spirit of Sussex Award recipients at graduation.

It has been a fantastic year, and I'm delighted to share with you how myself and the team have come up with innovative ways to promote the award and work towards our goal of enriching and recognising student's achievements – to support Sussex in building a community where every student feels that they belong. We are looking forward to developing and expanding the Spirit of Sussex Award and reaching our target of 50% of students participating by 2025.

I feel immense pride in the team for the energy, positivity and novel approaches towards the promotion and development of the award, and it's wonderful to share these accomplishments with you. We hope you enjoy our report, and we look forward to collaborating with you in the future!

REBECCA HART
Spirit of Sussex Award Manager & Staff Connector



KAMIL

Hello, I'm Kamil and I've been a Connector since Welcome Week, in September 2021. Ever since I heard of the Spirit of Sussex Award, I was passionate to help make a difference, as I knew how it felt to not be motivated or rewarded for my work outside of my degree. Ever since I started on this team it has become an important and fulfilling part of my life at Sussex, and I am so glad to be able to share with you the impact that we've had on students, and all the differences we've made.

The Spirit of Sussex Award is not only an award that celebrates students' co-curricular activities but also an award that celebrates the community at our university. Every society membership, every creative, cultural or sport event, and every little bit of initiative and contributions that students have done.

The award celebrates the individuals behind the statistics, and through the award, students have some things to show for their efforts. It is important to see the faces behind the work and their engagement, and this Impact Report is here to showcase and celebrate that.

The Impact Report highlights the importance of such an award. To let students make their mark during their degree. Showcase their incredible talents and go above and beyond. It's been a wonderful year for the Spirit of Sussex Award, both for us, and for the students that have participated, and this

comprehensive overview that we put together will showcase some of the milestones that we, as a community, have accomplished.

With many hours of hard work, there's an unmistakable sense of pride attached to showing our work, but also provides an even stronger push to work towards our future goals. This is what we do, so let's get stuck in.

KAMIL CZARNECKI
Spirit of Sussex Award Student Connector

2. WHAT IS THE SPIRIT OF SUSSEX AWARD?

The Spirit of Sussex Award celebrates and recognises co-curricular and voluntary achievements throughout a student's degree.

By taking part in different activities, such as career-readiness events, part-time work or volunteering, students gain points towards either a Bronze, Silver or Gold Spirit of Sussex Award. Through participating in the scheme, the award can help students to:

- feel more involved with life at Sussex;
- make friends and build a wider network while studying with us;
- reflect on co-curricular engagement and showcase achievements to future employers.

The Spirit of Sussex Award is a project funded by the University of Sussex Access and Participation Plan. As such, it aims to support the delivery of the Sussex 2025 Strategic Framework under the Learn to Transform (Aim 3.2) and Engage for Change (Aim 2.2 and 2.5) pillars, supporting students to become connected, engaged, entrepreneurial, and creative citizens of the world.

The overall aim is to deliver an engaging award programme that recognises students for their participation in voluntary and co-curricular activities. The award is an opportunity for students to collect points for activities they participate in, showcase their skills and achievements while enriching their experience at university. Through the points-based structure, students are encouraged to self-reflect on their achievements, helping them prepare for future job applications and further study.

The Spirit of Sussex Award scheme benefits from a co-creative approach between staff and student connectors, working in partnership to promote, develop and embed the award across the institution. This collaborative approach reflects the University's goal of supporting students to feel more engaged with the Sussex community and self-reflect on their personal and professional development.

Students across the institution, either working as a Connector on the award scheme or participating in the award, are creating a legacy for their peers and demonstrating the values of the University. Student Connectors ensure the award scheme is accessible for all, creating an award that truly reflects the co-curricular and voluntary contributions students make to our community.

“ OVER THE LAST YEAR, IT HAS BEEN SO EXCITING TO SEE AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF OUR STUDENTS ENGAGING IN THE SPIRIT OF SUSSEX AWARD. THE ETHOS OF A STUDENT-LED, COLLABORATIVE AWARD SCHEME, HAS HELPED FOSTER THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF THE AWARDS, THAT WE SEE THROUGHOUT THIS IMPORTANT REPORT. I AM VERY PROUD OF THE THRIVING SOSA COMMUNITY THAT WE NOW HAVE. ”

KELLY COATE, Pro Vice Chancellor for Education and Students



Students at the Dog Walking Society stall at Freshers Fair.

3. AWARD STRATEGY AND OUR GOALS

The aim of the current University of Sussex Access and Participation Plan seeks to address and ensure the equality of opportunity of under-represented groups at all stages of the student lifecycle.

The Spirit of Sussex Award is integral to this work as it recognises students for their participation in voluntary and co-curricular activities, therefore supporting students in developing and applying for skills for success whilst reducing significant gaps including:

- the attainment between white and Black students;
- the attainment between white and Asian students;
- the attainment between non-disabled students and those with a disability.

We are encouraging an institution-wide approach to create opportunities for students to train and develop, volunteer, mentor, analyse and evaluate. We are collaborating, signposting and promoting opportunities for students to showcase their skills and achievements to future employers, ultimately improving students' success and progression outcomes while at Sussex.

OUR GOALS

A target of 50% student participation in the Spirit of Sussex Award by 2025 has been set by University of Sussex Council. This institutional objective encompasses our specific aims which focus on fostering a sense of community amongst our target student groups.

Each year we strive to have an increase of 10% student participation from our Undergraduate and Postgraduate student population. Alongside these quantitative targets, we also have specific project outcomes we are looking to achieve by 2025:

1. Students who actively participate in the award undertake **more co-curricular and voluntary activities** than those who don't participate in the award scheme.
2. Engage and **co-create with students from a variety of social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds** as part of the award and connectors programme.
3. Students who participate in the award will **attain a 1st or 2:1 at a higher rate** than those from the same demographic who don't participate in the award scheme.
4. Students who participate in the award will **progress to highly skilled employment or further study within 15 months of graduating**, at a higher rate than those from the same demographic who don't participate.
5. Students who participate in the Spirit of Sussex Award **feel more connected to and proud of the University of Sussex** than those who don't in the award scheme.

→ See page 13 to view the progress we're making towards these goals.

Student hockey players.



4. CO-CREATING THE AWARD WITH STUDENT CONNECTORS

To work towards our success objectives to maximise student outcomes and progression, we have collaborated with the Connector Programme to foster a student-led approach at every stage of the award.

The Spirit of Sussex Award was the initial project for the Connector Programme to pilot, develop and grow the practice of Student Connectors working in partnership with staff communities across the University. Student Connectors from a variety of social, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds have been involved in the Spirit of Sussex Award, from the early stages of mapping the award on paper, to creating a visual identity and launching an award platform, to celebrating award recipients. This approach has enabled us to understand the student journey, ensuring the award is accessible and appealing to students.

Student Connectors engaging and co-creating on the award scheme build meaningful networks, celebrate student's accomplishments, and continuously promote the award through:



DELIVERING EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS

The team run a range of events throughout the academic year to raise the profile of the award. Our events are always student-led, and the Student Connectors collaborate with the University and Student's Union to deliver, support, or simply promote point-scoring events.



CREATING MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS

Student Connectors create a communications plan, develop, and design content, and raise awareness of point-scoring activities via social media channels.



ENHANCING AND EVALUATING THE AWARD PLATFORM

The team consistently develop and maximise the user experience on our custom award platform, ensuring students can easily log points and reflect on their co-curricular engagement. This includes developing custom web pages, live chat functions, an appointment booking system, event pages and our newly launched app.

We also deliver focus groups, speed-logging events, and live testing sessions with our target student groups, to help us collate feedback and continuously improve the platform.



RATIFICATION, GRADUATION AND IDENTIFYING AWARD CHAMPIONS

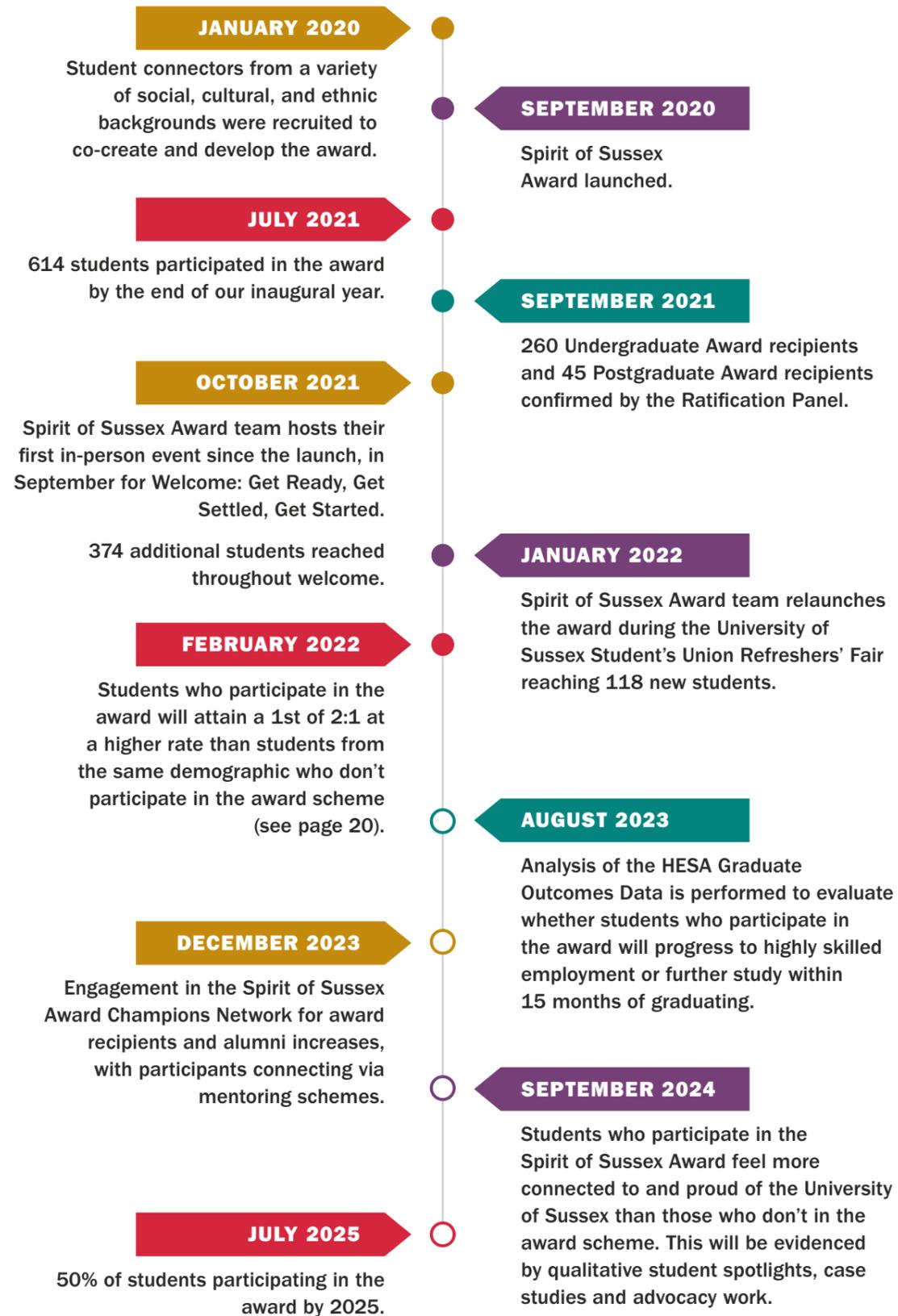
Connectors work with an appointed Ratification Panel made up of academic and professional service colleagues, Student Union officers, and senior leaders to ratify award submissions and determine award outcomes.

Once award levels are confirmed, we begin the process of certification and celebrating our award recipients at Graduation. Many of our award recipients advocate and champion the award for us, sharing their stories to inspire the next wave of awardees.



Student Connectors and the Spirit of Sussex Award Manager have created the timeline opposite which provides a view from when the award was first launched in September 2020 to how we envision the award progressing up until 2025. We have included notable milestones which include our predictions of the award's success and progression and when we expect to see our project outcomes come to fruition:

TIMELINE: PAST ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE AMBITIONS



5. OUR IMPACT

The Spirit of Sussex Award aims to offer an inclusive, accessible and appealing award across the whole institution, which has a positive impact on student's experience, success and progression. The self-nomination process of the award encourages students to self-reflect and develop their transferable skills. We evaluate the award scheme by measuring our progress towards project outcomes and goals outlined in section 3.

We analyse and evaluate the impact of our Undergraduate and Postgraduate finalist population, year-on-year, taking into consideration the following:

- The demographic of our award participants, to ensure the scheme has a diverse range of student's achieving a Bronze, Silver or Gold award.
- Embedding qualitative data framed around storytelling and legacy building. We encourage award-holders to share their experience of engaging in the award.
- Strive for the award to over-represent students from target groups, in comparison to the wider finalist population at Sussex.

The team have collated data from our Undergraduate and Postgraduate 2020/21 finalists and matched this to the below corresponding project objectives:

1. STUDENTS WHO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE AWARD UNDERTAKE MORE CO-CURRICULAR AND VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES THAN THOSE WHO DON'T PARTICIPATE IN THE AWARD SCHEME.

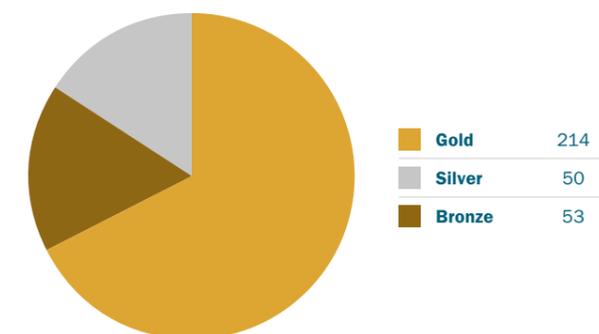
The Spirit of Sussex Award launched in September 2020, after extensive testing of the award platform with staff and student communities. The award is hosted on Abintegro Career Centre, part of the Access company focusing on digital software solutions and tools designed to support students to feel more confident and in control of their career and personal development.

Sussex took a unique approach to the platform, moving away from traditional self-assessment and career preparation tools, and instead towards a points-based functionality. Students build self-awareness of the transferable skills gained in co-curricular and voluntary activities by creating a portfolio of evidence, earning points along the way.

The award platform is the central way we measure and track engagement of the award. Over the next few years, as we work towards our 50% of students participating by 2025, we aim to use the platform alongside survey mechanisms to show that students who actively participate in the award undertake more co-curricular and voluntary activities than those who don't participate in the award scheme. We hope this will also correlate with increased attainment rates, showing transferable skills achieved through co-curricular and voluntary activities can be applied to student's curriculum engagement and degree progress.

From analysing award submission data from our **2020/21 finalist population**, we have summarised the findings below:

Figure 1: Total number of awardees in 2020/21 academic year: 317 (229 Undergraduates + 84 Postgraduates)



→ **Figure 1 shows that 65.7% of award recipients in 2020/21 (including Undergraduate and Postgraduate students) achieved a Gold-level award (214 candidates).**



Student's working together within the Formula 1 society.

Figure 2: Number of activities logged on average by finalist population

	Number of finalists who logged points by category	Total number of activities logged by category	Average number of activities logged in each category, by finalist total
Student Representation	144	203	0.64
Sports & Recreation	131	236	0.74
Society & Media Membership	226	605	1.91
Volunteering & Fundraising	164	263	0.83
Ambassadorship & Mentoring	66	101	0.32
Creativity & Culture	101	187	0.59
Co-creation & Evaluation	74	105	0.33
Work Experience	245	727	2.29
Training & Development	191	525	1.66
Other	75	102	0.32
Environment & Sustainability	49	72	0.23
Entrepreneurship	58	69	0.22

Equation: total number of activities logged by category / total number of finalists

→ **Figure 2 shows that from the 317 finalists, on average, each candidate logged approximately 2 activities (1.91) for Society and Media Membership, showing students have a deeper engagement with society and media groups, based on their interests.**

→ **Figure 2 shows that from the 317 finalists, each candidate logged 2 or more activities (2.29) in work experience, developing their career-readiness and expanding their work portfolios.**

Figure 3: Number of finalists who logged points by each category

	Number of finalists who logged points by category	Total number of activities logged by category	Total number of finalists who logged points by category
Student Representation	144	203	1.41
Sports & Recreation	131	236	1.80
Society & Media Membership	226	605	2.68
Volunteering & Fundraising	164	263	1.60
Ambassadorship & Mentoring	66	101	1.53
Creativity & Culture	101	187	1.85
Co-creation & Evaluation	74	105	1.42
Work Experience	245	727	2.97
Training & Development	191	525	2.75
Other	75	102	1.36
Environment & Sustainability	49	72	1.47
Entrepreneurship	58	69	1.19

Equation: total number of activities logged by category / number of finalists who logged points by category

→ **Figure 3 shows that students are highly affiliated with Society and Media groups, with a clear motivation amongst our 2020/21 finalists to engage deeply. It's easier for students to obtain points in this category, due to the large volume of opportunities on offer.**

→ **Figure 3 shows that on average, in more than half of the categories (7 out of 12), we see students log more than one activity, showing that a diversity of co-curricular opportunities is available to students.**

→ **Figure 3 shows Work Experience is the most popular category, with students wanting to be recognised for their part-time work and training. On average, each finalist that has logged in Work Experience completed nearly 3 activities.**

Figure 4: Average point distribution by finalists in each category

	Number of finalists who logged points by category	Total number of activities logged by category	Average number of points logged by finalists in each category
Student Representation	144	203	4.34
Sports & Recreation	131	236	6.07
Society & Media Membership	226	605	17.87
Volunteering & Fundraising	164	263	7.97
Ambassadorship & Mentoring	66	101	3.26
Creativity & Culture	101	187	5.00
Co-creation & Evaluation	74	105	2.46
Work Experience	245	727	13.22
Training & Development	191	525	8.53
Other	75	102	3.01
Environment & Sustainability	49	72	1.61
Entrepreneurship	58	69	2.33
TOTAL		3195	75.68 (equivalent to Gold)

Equation: total number of activities logged by category / number of finalists who logged points by category

→ **Figure 4 shows finalists logged at least 5 points or more in half of the award categories (6 out of 12)**

→ **Figure 4 shows that more activities or higher-level activities that require a higher level of participation were logged in Society and Media Membership, Work Experience, Training and Development, Volunteering and Fundraising**

→ **Figure 4 shows that on average each finalist logs 75.68 points, which is equivalent to a Gold award level (75 points and above), showing the award structure is accessible.**

→ **Further data analysis was performed, to exclude students who logged above 90 points as we acknowledge this significantly increases the average. When excluded, finalists obtained 63 points on average, equivalent to a Silver award.**

→ **Interestingly, 165 people of the 317 finalists, logged above 75 points which is more than half, at 52%. This shows that the award is reaching highly engaged students, who go above and beyond in their involvement and their self-reflection, However, further discussion will be required around the number of points attributed to our current award levels.**

At present, we are unable to explicitly evaluate that students who actively participate in the award undertake more co-curricular and voluntary activities than those who don't participate in the award scheme, due to an absence of data collection amongst the students who are not participating. However, from our finalist population, we can conclude that students on average log more than one activity within most categories, showing that there is frequency and routine in their engagement, particularly in Work Experience and Society and Media Membership categories.

2. ENGAGE AND CO-CREATE WITH STUDENTS FROM A VARIETY OF SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS AS PART OF THE AWARD AND CONNECTORS PROGRAMME.

The award has been co-created, launched and developed with Student and Graduate connectors from a variety of social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This means we are ensuring our target groups are working in partnership on the award while ensuring the award is accessible and appealing to our key audience.

We have a range of marketing mechanisms in place to target specific students, including email campaigns to other connectors, social media collaborations with societies and ensuring we collate feedback from these underrepresented groups.

With this in mind, we have not only performed an analysis on the types of co-curricular activities our finalists log points for; we have also analysed the demographic of this population. We are delighted to share with you our impact:



Students networking at the Spirit of Sussex Award mixer event during Welcome.

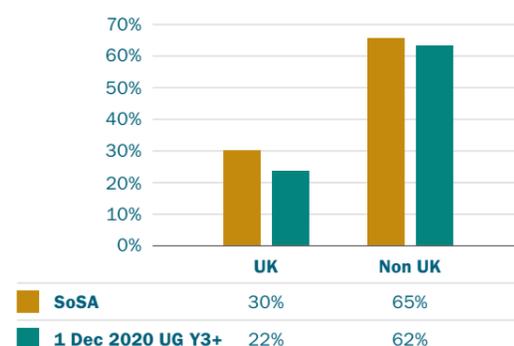
This data evaluates different demographic indicators amongst our 2020/21 Undergraduate award-recipients, in comparison to Undergraduate students in year 3+ on 1 December 2020.

Figure 5: Domicile



→ As shown in Figure 5, we have a larger proportion of Non-UK students in our award finalist population, than in the general UG Non-UK population. In terms of UK students, although there is only a 3% difference, we will need to focus on increasing our engagement amongst UK students.

Figure 6: BAME students



→ The highlight of our demographic data is the engagement of BAME UG finalists in the Spirit of Sussex Award. When looking at Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students we can see a higher proportion (additional 8%) in UK students compared to the population. We are also more representative of BAME students in the award for Non-UK students.

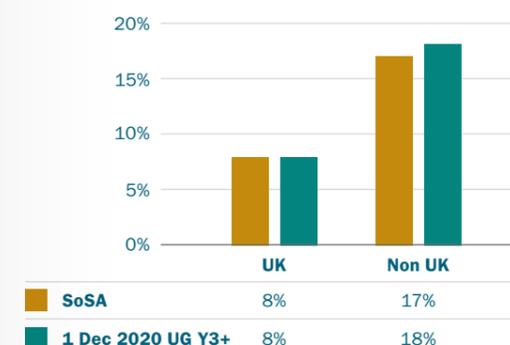
Figure 7: Students with a disability



→ Figure 7 shows that there is a higher proportion of students who have declared a disability participating in the award, compared to the general UG Year 3+ population. This is significantly higher when looking at Non-UK students, with a 6% increase, compared to the general population.

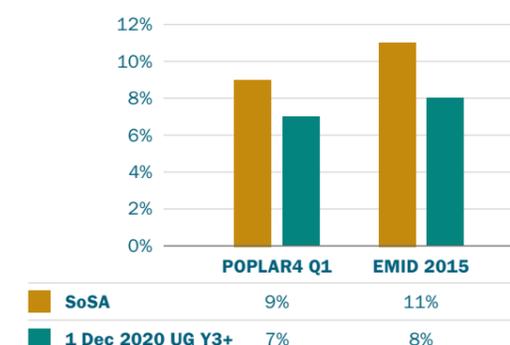
This shows the award is accessible and appealing to students with a range of disabilities, a key target group in the Access and Participation Plan.

Figure 8: Mature on entry



→ The Student Engagement and Enhancement team are creating meaningful opportunities and activities for mature students, to create a space for networking and sharing commonalities that occur as a mature student. In Figure 8, we can see that for UK domiciled students, the Spirit of Sussex Award is in-line with the UG Year 3+ population, and only 1% lower for Non-UK students.

Figure 9: Postcode measures



→ For Participation of Local Areas (POLAR4) quintiles, we have a higher representative of students from this group in our finalist population than the UG Y3+ population. POLAR classifies local areas into five groups – or quintiles – based on the proportion of young people who enter higher education aged 18 or 19 years old.

→ English Index of Deprivation (EIMD) refers to income, employment, education, health, crime, access to housing and services and living environment. We also have a higher representation of students who meet this postcode measure than the wider UG Y3+ population.

Visit Office for Students for further information on POLAR4 criteria and EIMD 2015 quintiles – <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/young-participation-by-area/about-polar-and-adult-he>

In terms of our postgraduate finalists, due to only 84 postgraduates receiving an award, the data sample is currently too small to perform a full analysis. We are also unable to receive completion status for a number of these students due to the resit assessment period, and viva voce processes amongst Postgraduate Doctoral finalists.

NB The UK data excludes Channel Islands and Isle of Man, and any reference to data excludes Brighton and Sussex Medical School finalists.

NB In future years, when our data sample is larger, we will be able to perform additional analysis on attainment rate by specific demographic criteria.

3. STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATE IN THE AWARD WILL ATTAIN A 1ST OR 2:1 AT A HIGHER RATE THAN THOSE FROM THE SAME DEMOGRAPHIC WHO DON'T PARTICIPATE IN THE AWARD SCHEME.

Figure 10: Attainment rate for qualifiers



→ Figure 10 shows, that UG finalists who received a Spirit of Sussex Award have a significantly higher attainment rate compared to the UG Y3+ population. For UK domicile, there is 6.4% increase, but more impressively, there is a 35.7% increase for Non-UK students. We are hopeful that the award criteria, which encourages students to self-reflect on their level of participation and upskill in personal development, has created transferable skills that have been applied positively to curriculum assessments, creating well-rounded and engaged graduates.

NB In future years, when our data sample is larger, we will be able to perform additional analysis on attainment rate by specific demographic criteria.

4. STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATE IN THE AWARD WILL PROGRESS TO HIGHLY SKILLED EMPLOYMENT OR FURTHER STUDY WITHIN 15 MONTHS OF GRADUATING, AT A HIGHER RATE THAN THOSE FROM THE SAME DEMOGRAPHIC WHO DON'T PARTICIPATE.

We feel positive that due to the higher rates of attainment amongst Spirit of Sussex Awardees, there will be an improvement in closing career gaps as these finalists can showcase their co-curricular and voluntary engagement alongside their degree commitments.

We have highlighted below four graduates' career or further study progression since graduating and receiving a Spirit of Sussex Award:

1. MEGAN LE DOARÉ

- Development Coordinator at Caplor Horizons.
- Graduate in MA Migration and Global Development Student
- Gold Award Winner in recognition of volunteering with SolidariTEE, a student led charity raising awareness of refugee crisis, volunteering at Common Ground Brighton, a local community garden and language learning.



2. MOHAMED LAGHA

- Research Consultant at Chatham House
- Graduate in MA International Relations
- Gold Award winner in recognition for their role as a Student Representative for School of Global Studies, an Elected Councillor at the Union Council, Participant in the National Model United Nations Conference (NMUN) 2021, and volunteer for the Buddy Scheme.



3. JORDI CARTER

- Young Producer @ Theatre Peckham
- Graduate in BA Drama & Film Studies
- Gold Award Winner in recognition of engagement and passion for radio presenting, acting with the Drama Society, modelling with Fabrik Magazine, creative direction within the BAME society, student mentoring and language learning.



4. ALEXANDRA LEATHER

- MSc Digital Marketing Student at Kings College London
- Graduate in BSc Marketing & Management
- Gold Award Winner in recognition of supporting students via the Buddy Scheme and representing the voices of students through Course Representative and Student Mentor roles, and professional development in Marketing Internships and Side Hustle Club events.



5. STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATE IN THE SPIRIT OF SUSSEX AWARD FEEL MORE CONNECTED TO AND PROUD OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX THAN THOSE WHO DON'T IN THE AWARD SCHEME

We have collated qualitative feedback from current and graduate awardees, to show the impact of co-curricular opportunities and how the self-reflective model of the award enables students to demonstrate their pride and sense of belonging at the University:

SHIQING GONG,
Graduate in MA
Development Studies
Award level achievement:
Bronze

Programme Assistant at
UNESCO International
Research and Training
Centre for Rural Education
(UNESCO INRULED).



“If you're eager and have the interest to do something, that makes your life more fulfilling at Sussex, you should engage with the award and get involved in activities, no matter what they are. The skills and experiences I have gained from my time at Sussex have stayed with me.”

**VALERIA YÁÑEZ
CARVAJAL,** Graduate
in MA Childhood and
Youth Studies

Award level achievement:
Gold
Education Psychology
Lecturer in Chile



“For me, I found the degree wasn't easy, especially during Covid-19. I needed something or some recognition to make me feel more part of this university experience, outside of the online sessions. The award helped me feel closer to the university and see the value in extra activities.”

JOSHUA OKODUWA,
Graduate in MA Poverty
and Development

Award level achievement:
Gold

UK Program Fellow at
Global Giving and Founder
of Restructure Africa



“The award is a fantastic reminder that regardless of what you're going through, try as much as possible to help others, and through that, you'll find what you're looking for. The award helped me connect better with people, it encouraged me to involve myself in activities to help me succeed whilst having a community to support me. What I liked about the award was that it showed you other ways to make an impact, the self-nomination process makes you understand your own impact and reflect.

I feel there is a lot of power in storytelling, leaving positive digital footprints and a legacy that fellow students and people in the community can research and be inspired. The award was recognition for my achievements, and now I can say: “Hey guys, while I was at Sussex, I did this role and this activity, and allowed the school to truly pass through me!”

ON TRACK TO 2025

As we reflect on a brilliant first year and a half of the Spirit of Sussex Award scheme, we are working towards growing the number of participants actively engaging on the scheme, and measuring the impact of the award on student's, community spirit and employability. We are looking ahead to how we can develop and enhance the award further for the 2022/23 academic year. Our key priorities are:

1. TO UTILISE EVALUATION TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT THE AWARD HAS ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE AT SUSSEX

2. TO GROW THE PROGRAMME TO ACHIEVE AN ADDITIONAL 10% OF THE STUDENT POPULATION ENGAGING WITH THE AWARD PER YEAR.

3. TO ENSURE THE AWARD IS ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE TO ALL STUDENTS, RECOGNISING THE DIVERSITY OF OUR STUDENT COMMUNITY. WE WILL ENCOURAGE AND PRIORITISE UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS IN AWARD PROMOTION, AS WELL AS GATHERING FEEDBACK.

4. TO GROW AND PROVIDE A SPACE FOR AWARD CHAMPIONS TO SHARE THEIR EXPERTISE, BEST PRACTICE AND BECOME ROLE-MODELS FOR CURRENT STUDENTS AT SUSSEX.

HOW WE PLAN TO EVALUATE PROGRESS AND WIDER IMPACT

Over the next year of the award, we will be reviewing how we measure the wider impact of the award, with the aim of digging deeper into student's career readiness and personal development skills. To do this, we will apply the NERUPI framework throughout the 2022/23 academic year, as we will have embedded feedback mechanisms, technological tools and solutions and a wider data sample.

NERUPI is a praxis-based framework, which brings together theory, research, and a community of practice to support evaluators and practitioners to design, evaluate and report on interventions, to improve practice across the sector from outreach to student success to graduate progression.

Our NERUPI objectives for the Spirit of Sussex Award 2022/23 academic year are:

Career-readiness

- Increase awareness of study options, social and leisure facilities, and career opportunities for students.
- Access and utilise appropriate opportunities and provisions to orientate themselves towards and realise personal goals.
- Identify and utilise opportunities and make informed choices that align with career aspirations.

Personal development and progression

- Identify and utilise opportunities and make informed choices that align with personal interests.
- Maximise the benefits of university life and successfully progress to graduate employment.
- Consolidate study skills and capacity for academic and graduate success.

→ For further information on the NERUPI framework and network, visit www.nerupi.co.uk/about/overview

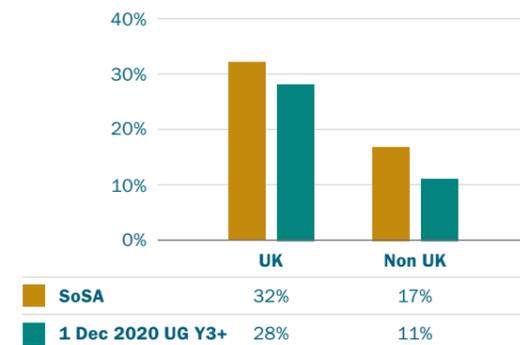
EARLY TRENDS IN OUR 2021-22 AWARD POPULATION

This report focuses on the award engagement, activities and demographic of our 2020/21 award finalists.

Since evaluating this data, we have performed further analysis on current 2021/22 award participants. We have made the following progress on engaging with our target groups:

- The award has a greater proportion of UK BAME current Undergraduates participating (33% in total) compared to the current Undergraduate student population of 27%, **showing a 5% increase**.
- We need to do further work to increase our engagement with Non-UK BAME students, as we have a 14% lower proportion of Non-UK BAME Undergraduates compared the current Undergraduates student population.
- The award has a higher proportion of UK-based Undergraduate Mature Students (13%) than the current Undergraduate student population (9%), with a 4% increase.
- For postcode measures, the award is in line with POLAR4 Q1 and EIMD 2015 measures, with 8% in both SoSA participants and the undergraduate student population.

Figure 1: Students with a disability



- When looking at Undergraduate students with a disability, we have excelled in reaching students with a declared disability for both UK and Non-UK. **41% of UK students participating in the award have a disability, compared to 26% of the general population**, showing a higher proportion of 15%. For Non-UK students, we have a 12% higher proportion of students with a disability engaging with the award (23% in total), compared to 11% of the Undergraduate student population.

From analysing the demographic of current award participants, we are delighted to see that **we are in line or continuously overrepresenting in our widening participation target groups**, as outlined in the Access and Participation Plan.

*Data exported on 1 February 2022. We have not yet been able to analyse the demographic of postgraduate students compared to the wider population, due to the smaller data size.

CURRENT CO-CURRICULAR AND VOLUNTARY ACTIVITY ENGAGEMENT IN THE AWARD:

1,274 STUDENTS HAVE RECEIVED OR ARE CURRENTLY WORKING TOWARDS AN AWARD LEVEL (INCLUDING 2020/21 AWARDEES AND CURRENT STUDENTS)

1,122 STUDENTS HAVE ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN SPORTS, SOCIETIES AND MEDIA CLUBS

726 VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES LOGGED

324 NEW SKILLS LOGGED IN TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

1,374 PART-TIME JOBS LOGGED

300 CO-CREATION AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN LOGGED FOR WORKING WITH ACADEMIC AND/OR PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATIONS

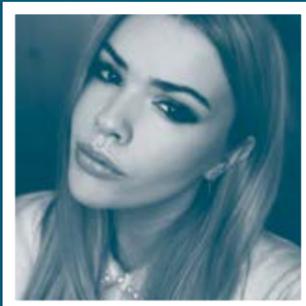
94 STUDENTS OWN A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE OR BUSINESS

233 STUDENTS HAVE CREATED AND PRODUCED CONTENT FOR CREATIVE AND CULTURAL EVENTS

*Data exported on 8 March 2022.



6. STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Meet Abbie Brookes, final-year undergraduate studying BSc Psychology and currently logging points and working towards a Spirit of Sussex Gold Award. The Spirit of Sussex Award Manager, Rebecca Hart and Student Connector, Riko Kunisue caught up with Abbie to find out more about her co-curricular involvement and her passion for volunteering, advocacy, and community spirit!

SoSA: Thanks Abbie for joining us today! First can you tell us how you started participating in the award?

Abbie: At first, I wasn't sure if the award was for me, as I thought I'd have to get involved in volunteering with a large charity or organisation. Once I read through all the categories, I realised that I'm already doing a range of activities I could get recognised for, and even the things I consider tiny, contribute to my university and local community. The great thing about the award, is that I only do things I enjoy but can still be a large contributor.

SoSA: That's really inspiring Abbie and embodies the importance and values of the award. I can actually see that you've recently logged points in Creativity and Culture for your passion for photography – can you tell us more?

Abbie: Yes, I'm lucky to live in the countryside, and really enjoy photographing the local scenery. So what started as a passion has actually turned into me working with the Sussex Tab newspaper – they were

looking for photos of the countryside during the first lockdown, so I sent a load in and these have been used to promote wellness and enjoying the local area.

SoSA: It's great to see you get credited for something you really enjoy! Please could you also share more about your advocacy work for road safety and local volunteering?

Abbie: Yes, first of all, I'm the youngest voluntary Board Councillor for my Party in Lower Beeding, West Sussex. Within my role, I discuss local topics and concerns in the meetings including environmental concerns and local pollution. As a Board Councillor, I also work in the Transport Working Party for West Sussex, where we are campaign for road safety awareness – I am now involved in rallying, tracking data, fundraising for safety products and we've even been featured in the local newspaper.

SoSA: Do you feel these diverse range of activities have improved you as a person?

Abbie: Yes, definitely. The community engagement helped me advance my confidence, in knowing I can achieve a lot if I just try and believe I can do it! Even becoming a Board Councillor – I was convinced there was no way I would be elected, but now that I'm a 22-year-old female campaigning for change, I really do have more confidence in myself.

They have also really helped my communication skills and more specifically, ability to talk to new people.

SoSA: How do you think your activities and the Spirit of Sussex Award will help you in the future?

Abbie: Through being part of the council, I've had opportunities to network with people outside my usual social spaces, including entrepreneurs, and now know people in all different places. Also, in future interviews, the award enables me to talk about a variety of activities and sound so much more interesting! The Spirit of Sussex Award looks good on your CV too, it shows a level of commitment outside of your degree.

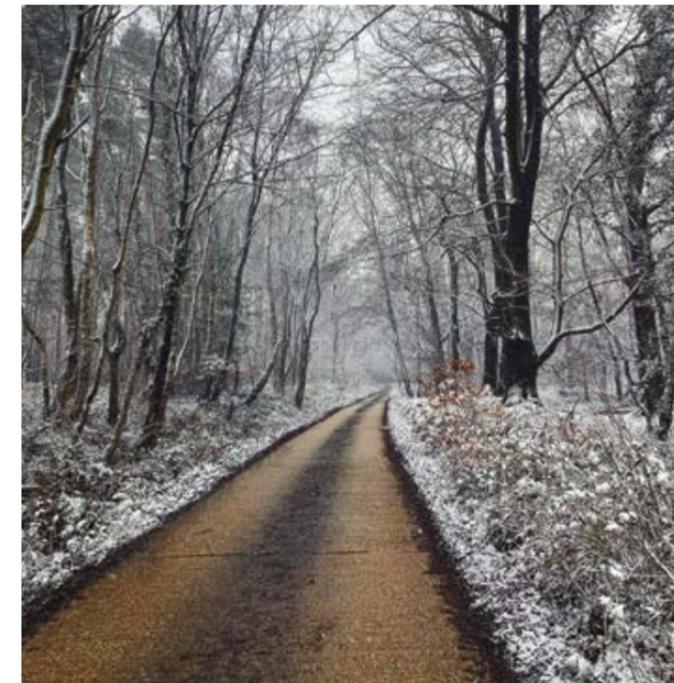
In terms of my student community, I feel I am leaving a legacy by achieving the award. In 10 years, time, I'll have my own electronic footprint through my photography and co-curricular activities – even though it's small, it's still a part of me, forever in the University.

SoSA: Thanks so much Abbie for sharing your story – any last advice for current students?

Abbie: Go for the award – just spend time, reading through the categories and you'll be surprised at how much you contribute without realising. For me, I've just engaged with small things as I go, simply being involved in the community is most important; the award is a bonus!

For example, I recently supported a local business in a gift-wrapping service as the owner was struggling due to arthritis, yes it may only be 5 points, but if you're a kind person it will all add up.

Believe in yourself and keep trying. Opportunities aren't always closed-off and there are so many skills you can gain from whatever interests you.



Photography by Abbie Brookes.

“ I FEEL I AM LEAVING A LEGACY BY ACHIEVING THE AWARD... EVEN THOUGH IT'S SMALL, IT'S STILL A PART OF ME, FOREVER IN THE UNIVERSITY. ”

7. GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT



Meet Valeria Yáñez Carvajal, Graduate in MA Childhood and Youth Studies, Education Psychology Lecturer in Chile & Spirit of Sussex Gold Award recipient.

In this interview we hear from Valeria on life after a Postgraduate degree. Valeria shares the value of the Spirit of Sussex Award, and how the Sussex community supported her while studying from home.

SoSA: Hi Valeria! What have you been up to since completing your Master's in Childhood and Youth Studies this October?

Valeria: Hello, I'm currently back home in Chile, enjoying our summer holidays. I'm eagerly waiting for March as I will be starting a new job! I have a new position as a lecturer at a local university where I will be teaching Education and Psychology to undergraduates. One of the reasons I chose to do an MA at Sussex, was because of the critical thinking aspect of the curriculum. I found common ground with the course, as I am a student parent myself, so I look forward to creating the same experience with my new students.

SoSA: Congratulations! Firstly, how did you come across the Spirit of Sussex Award and what made you get involved?

Valeria: I received an email about the award scheme, so I clicked the website and found it interesting, so I immediately started logging points! For me, I found the degree wasn't easy, especially the online sessions. I needed something or some recognition to

make me feel more part of this university experience, outside the online sessions. The award helped me feel closer to the university and see the value in extra activities.

SoSA: When you submitted your award, you detailed how you were part of the Student Parent community at Sussex. Could you tell us more about how you found the support network?

Valeria: Yes, so my award was completed during my thesis, and I was reflecting on how important it was that I felt belonged to the student community, I'm very grateful for the experiences I had. I remember, from my first week at Sussex, I found it amazing, how many societies and groups there were to engage in, from the student union, student-parent community, the research spaces and so many other activities.

This was different in comparison to Chile, we're often very focused on our individual experience and actions, so it was great to see Sussex have a more collective perspective of the University experience, I was constantly invited to different spaces, based on shared interests.

Within my first week, I received an email about the student-parent community. I'd just travelled over here with family, so the timing was great, and it was accessible. Although, studying online due to Covid-19, was hard, the student-parent group I joined online was easier with the children, there was lots of emotional support as all of us were in a difficult situation, plus studying. It was a safe space to share.

SoSA: It's wonderful to hear despite Covid-19 challenges, you were able to socialise frequently and join co-curricular and voluntary activities. Tell us more about your experience as a Buddy Scheme volunteer – what made you sign up for the scheme?

Valeria: Sure, so again, within my first week I received emails from different departments, one of these was the buddy scheme so I thought I'd participate as a new student – to feel more involved and meet new people. My own experience didn't go as well as I'd hoped, but this didn't stop me. Instead, I became a volunteer to contribute to other people's journeys at an important moment in their lives, make a difference and hopefully, relate and inspire other students.

SoSA: That's great that you decided to make a difference to your fellow students, and you earned 10 points towards your award by volunteering as a Buddy! You also logged points for activities where you planned and delivered co-curricular sessions – can you tell us more about when you demonstrated leadership skills?

Valeria: So, throughout my degree, I was really interested in sexuality within educational settings, so I continued this research in my spare time and spoke to current researchers. I feel University is not just about what you learn on the course, it's about your own searching, your own learning and individual networks. My lecturer gave me useful resources and networks to join, and I launched a focus group session on how educators can teach gender to children. I prepared questions in advance, with the idea that the group of teachers from across the Southeast of England could share experiences, concerns and challenges in the virtual session, Padlet and breakout rooms. It was a really interesting session to host, and it created meaningful networks and connections as well as promoting equality in education settings.

SoSA: Thanks, Valeria. So, with this in mind, what skills do you feel you gained from these co-curricular and voluntary activities?

Valeria: It really helped that at Sussex, I was always invited to different spaces and communities and these activities allowed me to get a complex, rich and diverse experience – the activities supported my mental health but also prepared me for the future, even the award scheme helped when searching for jobs, as I was able to spend time reflecting my experiences when I was logging points for activities.

For instance, at my last interview, when people ask about my master's experience, I can tell them not only about my specialism but also show how I participated at University, even in a lockdown situation. I got more out of Sussex than the degree, from these shared experiences!

“ **THE AWARD HELPED ME FEEL CLOSER TO THE UNIVERSITY AND SEE THE VALUE IN EXTRA ACTIVITIES.** ”

SoSA: Finally, do you have any last advice for students thinking of taking part in the award?

Valeria: I would say to students, 'why not?!'. I think it is necessary to participate in different spaces with lots of different interests. Don't be afraid to share your co-curricular experiences – I took the time towards the end of my degree to complete the award, and realised I'd already been participating without any knowledge! By doing the Buddy Scheme, and being part of Student Parent groups, I was already earning points!



Buddy Scheme volunteer supporting their new buddy.

8. MARKETING STRATEGY AND ENGAGEMENT

To achieve this award progress and impact in our launch year (2020/21), the Spirit of Sussex Award team have explored a range of marketing tools, platforms, and channels. From co-creating a visual identity and embedding this institution-wide to raising awareness of the award, to then adapting to solely online communication and promotion, the team have created an exciting hub of digital assets and content to continuously increase our engagement, whilst keeping the award appealing and on-trend.

Due to the award launching during Covid-19 much of our promotion has been shared digitally. This has required innovation and creativity, and the Student Connectors have enhanced their digital literacy skills by expanding their independent research, adaptability and collaboration. We have highlighted below the key marketing tools we have utilised in our launch year, including engagement statistics, reflections, and recommendations:

EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS

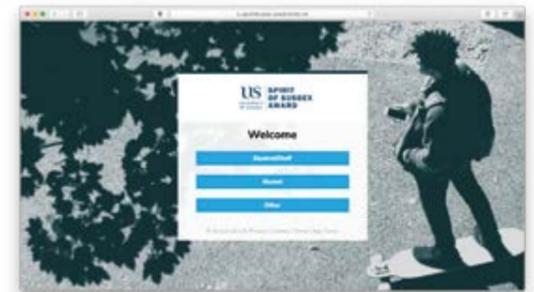
For large-scale email campaigns, with specific call-to-actions and targeted audience, we have adopted Mailchimp – a software solution for customer relation management (CRM) to optimise efficiency in sending emails to audiences above 500 recipients, understanding patterns in our email engagement data and for providing audience insights.

Another reason we adopted Mailchimp is for the creative toolkit, Mailchimp enables us to incorporate our visual identity, tone of voice and add personalisation to email campaigns. From tracking the performance of our email campaigns, we have found the following highlights:

- For the introductory 'Make your Mark with the award' email campaign sent to Undergraduate students in December 2021, we received 3,788 opens in total and 439 total clicks. There were 180 unique clicks with 64% of these clicks being directed to the award platform.
- **54% (2039 recipients) of the Undergraduate students who opened this introductory email, identified as Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME), both UK and International students.**
- Our collaboration with the NSS was a success. This campaign encouraged Undergraduate finalists to log 5 points for their NSS completion, and saw 67% (221 recipients) open the email and 21.2% clicked the links provided (70 unique clicks).
- Across December 2021, 14 campaigns were delivered, both large-scale (10K+ recipients) and small-scale targeted emails (<500 recipients) – from these campaigns we received a total of **757 clicks onto the platform.**
- A successful strategy has been to retarget specific audience members based on their engagement levels. For instance, we have prompted follow-up emails to target students who have opened an initial email but not logged onto the award platform. From the 3,230 students who received this email, 71% (2302) opened the email and 7% (224) of them then clicked further onto the platform.

WEBPAGE ENGAGEMENT

The Spirit of Sussex Award has a variety of channels; however, we always link to our central award page created on the Student Hub categorised under 'your student experience'. When analysing the engagement of this page via Google Analytics and Data Studio, we can see that our page is 33rd in overall page rankings in the Student Hub, with 10,988 unique pageviews between its launch in 1 September 2020 – 16 February 2022. However, this includes internal and external searches, and we are unable to determine staff and student pageviews.



Further analysis of specific activity on our Student Hub page, shows that there have been 4,286 unique clicks from the hub page to the platform. This aligns with the platform, as we have received a total of 4,628 logins to the platform, showing most users access the platform via the Student Hub page.

When analysing other acquisition routes to the Student Hub page and platform, we were able to see that users have clicked links within Flint articles, directing them to our page. The Flint is an online student newsletter, signposting students to topical features, news and events – articles are often created and authored by students, such as the award connectors. In May 2021, we released a Flint article with a call-to-action reminding students to log points over the summer – this article received 445 unique views. When we further analysed the performance of this specific article against all Flint articles between 16 February 2021 – 16 February 2022, we were pleasantly surprised to see that this article was ranked 7th most viewed article, based on the number of unique views (445).

During the Get Ready and Get Settled phases of welcome, we collaborated with the Welcome team to launch the promotion of the award to new students joining the University. We received a total of 1,264 visits onto our Student Hub page, directed from Welcome content and links. This highlights the value in raising awareness of the award, even before students start their degrees!



INSTAGRAM

Instagram was selected as the Spirit of Sussex Award's main social media platform when it was initially launched, a decision made on its popularity amongst the student population. Due to high engagement from followers, the platform has been utilised for the promotion of the award, with the team providing various stories and posts weekly, to keep followers informed of ways to interact with the award. Content is tailored towards the diverse ways students can log points, the promotion of events and opportunities both within the award and with other university and student union groups, therefore making it a vital collaborative tool.

Engagement

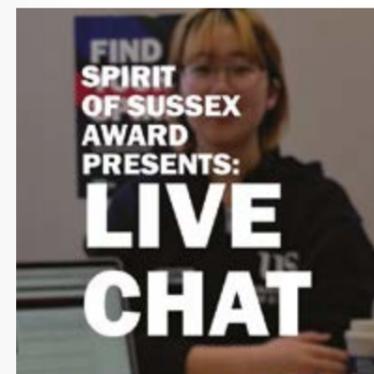
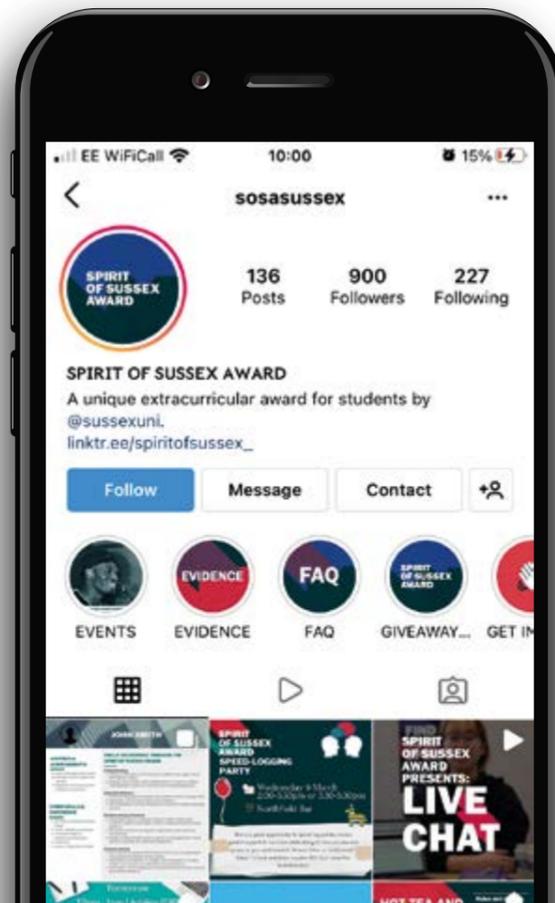
The account typically experiences it's highest levels of traffic during busier periods within the academic calendar. The highest period of engagement we see year on year is during the Welcome periods, in which more students engage with Instagram and visit the page. Across September welcome, the profile received 1,060 profile visits in 2020 and 922 in 2021. The team have had Instagram recruitment drives, where we have directed students straight to the page in order to increase our following and drive engagement figures.

We have also obtained data that shows the demographic of our followers. This information helps us to predict and develop content that can suit our audience, but also enables us to identify our lower represented groups within our target audience. The majority of our Instagram followers identify as women, 66% in comparison to 34% identifying as men. Our main age bracket is 18-24 with some engagement from those aged 25-34. This is to be expected and aligns with the current engagement on the award platform.

Posts

From analysing the engagement of Instagram posts, we have found that posts with a competition element provide an excellent incentive to introduce new students to the award. Promotions for prize give-aways and competitions have proven to be our highest engaging posts, with our most recent reaching 858 users, whilst our previous two give-away posts have both received 123 likes and 98 comments respectively.

Instagram posts are able to reach high volumes of students quickly and is an important marketing tool for the team. Our most successful post was the 'Reintroduction to the Spirit of Sussex Award' post in January 2021 reaching 2,667 users. Posts that show connectors, award participants and behind-the-scenes of the team perform better than text based graphics, we believe this is due to posts appearing more personable, representative and welcoming. Our freshers fair post received a reach of 540 users, of which 403 were followers and 137 non followers and gained 65 likes. This converted to 20 profile visits, showing that posts featuring student connectors are more relatable. Our average number of users reached per post as of March 2022 is 296 users. We therefore value the use of social media as a fundamental means of communicating with our audience and encouraging them to participate with the award.



QR SCANS

The Spirit of Sussex Award team adopted QR scans to maximise efficiency and create an easier signposting process. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing restrictions, QR codes have been revived and become mainstream, therefore it has been a valuable tool for us in sharing information, in fast-paced environments.

We currently have two active QR codes:



1. Links to our Student Hub page – this has a top-level purpose to direct students to our Student Hub specific page containing award information, FAQs, case studies and most importantly, a link to our award platform.



2. Landing page of top sites – used at in-person events, this functions as a launchpad to our central channels: Instagram, award platform and Student Hub page. This works similarly to bio link tools used on social media profiles, for easy link management to videos, articles, websites, social posts, surveys etc.

We received 132 overall scans between July 2021-February 2022. 91 of these scans have been via the first QR code taking recipients to our student hub pages, during peak times of welcome in September and January. The remaining 41 scans are via the second QR code, used at smaller-scale events and pop-up stalls throughout November and February.



ENGAGEMENT IN WELCOME WEEK

The Spirit of Sussex Award team has recognised the importance that the Welcome Week and settling in period offers and aims to utilise this to increase student engagement in co-curricular activities and the award. Across September 2021 and January 2022, pop up stalls on campus were set up and run by connectors, who have proven pivotal to attracting engagement from new students.

The purpose of the stalls is to:

- introduce new and returning students to the award;
- develop a rapport with new and returning students on a peer-to-peer basis;
- engage them with our social media channels as a key platform of information, events and award updates;
- familiarise new and returning students with navigating our platform.

In September 2021, the team piloted paid advertisement & promotions via Meta: Facebook for Business campaign suite, with the ad being aired across Instagram and Facebook channels. The ad was live during the 2021 welcome period, between the 3rd-29th of September. The purpose of this initial ad was to raise awareness of our visual identity and attract attention to the award during this welcome period. We also ensured the ad was retargeted to audience members that initially engaged with the ad. For the Instagram campaign, we observed high levels of engagement, receiving 940 visits on our Instagram page and 144 new followers. The ad was coupled with our in-person engagement drive too, and we were able to reach a peak of over 200 Instagram visits in the last few days the ad campaign was live.

We observed increased levels of engagement during September 2021 Welcome Week, with peaks of traffic and engagement on our Instagram page. The most popular post throughout this period encouraged new students to come to the welcome fair to meet the team – this reached 526 users and received 64 likes. Similarly, across our January 2022 Welcome Week, we continued to observe high levels of social media engagement, with 25% of those that visited the page, becoming followers. The cause for such high engagement was due to a collective team push at the Refreshers Fair, encouraging each student to follow our Instagram account, and then participate in the fun activities on offer and win prizes. In Figure 1, the graph shows the spike in new followers during this event.

Figure 1: New Instagram followers



Our overall objective from this campaign launch was to reach the wider student body and the influx of new students and provide award awareness and signposting of co-curricular opportunities. Due to the higher levels of engagement, we observed throughout September and January welcome periods, we anticipate this was due to a hybrid model of increased online exposure and on-campus presence. This was vital in encouraging new students to engage with the award early on in their time at University.

We therefore value our involvement at Welcome as a fundamental aspect in driving engagement with the award.



Student ambassadors welcome new arrivals onto campus.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Spirit of Sussex Award connectors have conceptualized numerous ways to increase digital engagement amongst the Sussex community, particularly utilizing our main social media channel: Instagram. In recent months, we have considered and researched the effect of Instagram's algorithm and the value now placed on types of content such as reels, photo drops and filter effects. These more favoured formats are being prioritized on Instagram users' feeds, so most of the content they consume is in these newly launched formats. Consequently, engagement has fallen drastically on this platform, not only for SoSA but for a wide range of accounts, as users miss content, based on Instagram's 'score of interest' initiative.

Josh Aiyenuro, a Spirit of Sussex Award Student Connector focused on content creation, management and evaluation, has shared a few methods and key takeaways that the SoSA team should implement to counteract these effects as the award grows:

1. Based on the new algorithm, accounts, where posts have previously been saved by followers, are more likely to appear on a follower's timeline. As a result, we should encourage followers to save posts with a clear call-to-action such as events, competitions and ratification reminders, as this may lead to greater engagement amongst existing followers.

2. Hashtags are another tool that has been underutilized by our account. During the launch of the award, we included **#spiritofsussexaward** hashtag into posts, however, we now believe this was too specific and therefore it would not be visible to a wider reach. However, by encouraging the use of the **#spiritofsussexaward** hashtag when participants of the award or student groups post about the award could create a greater demand to view and use the hashtag.

This should also be used when we run competitions and incentives. The effectiveness of this technique can then be evaluated by how many people follow our account via the hashtag using Meta Business Suite.

3. In terms of the actual content that we post, we have seen a larger number of likes and interactions when posts include faces and people. This is likely due to users reacting adversely to writing, as it feels too formal, whereas photos are friendly, nurturing, and easier to interact with. We are always eager to ensure the visual identity of the award is accessible, so we need to be mindful of using images of text, as assistive technologies cannot always read the text contained in an image.

4. An area we have not yet incorporated into our grid, is Instagram reels. Reels replicate the TikTok platform's style which is currently more popular amongst our target student population. This fast-paced, snappy content is more intriguing and engaging than the lengthier IGTV format and suits the want and need of consuming content quickly. For the Spirit of Sussex Award account, IGTV had the lowest viewership compared to stories and grid posts, and therefore we should move away from this format and adopt reels for promotional videos, interviews for student and graduate spotlights and to feature students engaging in co-curricular activities.



MARKETING AND ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY:

54% (2039 RECIPIENTS) OF THE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS WHO OPENED INTRODUCTORY EMAIL, IDENTIFIED AS BLACK, ASIAN, MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME), BOTH UK AND NON-UK STUDENTS

296 AVERAGE USERS REACHED PER INSTAGRAM POST (AS OF MARCH 2022)

132 TOTAL QR SCANS BETWEEN JULY 2021 – FEBRUARY 2022

757 TOTAL CLICKS ONTO THE AWARD PLATFORM FROM EMAIL CAMPAIGNS DELIVERED ACROSS DECEMBER 2021

4,286 UNIQUE CLICKS FROM THE STUDENT HUB TO THE AWARD PLATFORM BETWEEN 1 SEPTEMBER 2020 – 16 FEBRUARY 2022

7th MOST VIEWED FLINT ARTICLE BETWEEN FEBRUARY 2021 – FEBRUARY 2022, WITH A TOTAL OF 445 VIEWS



9. CONNECTORS MAKING THEIR MARK

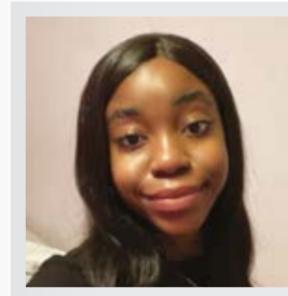
Spirit of Sussex Award student and graduate connectors share their proudest moments and achievements, from their time co-creating, developing and growing the award.

JOSHUA AIYENURO

Working as a connector has given me confidence in working in a team and independently, I trust my intuition to solve issues collaboratively, which are skills that can be transferred into other work experiences. There is much to be proud of when I think about our progress compared to the beginning of 2020 – from creating a design for the award, a prominent online presence, running successful events at the University, and much more!



My favourite milestone was the creation of our promotional video, from discussing the style and design in the planning stages to production, it was great to be a part of. The process started with our team brainstorming the ideas behind taglines, main messaging, structure and what references we could use from pop culture. We then recruited students from Societies such as Leave no Trace and Women's Football to take part, their enthusiasm was amazing to see. Giving students the opportunity to be a part of the filming of the video helped us establish new networks as we began to create a SoSA community. Even to this day, we contact some of these students for help!



FLORENCE AINA

Working for the Spirit of Sussex Award has exposed me to a workplace setting that I have never experienced before and showed me what working in a co-creation and professional setting

is truly like! I have enjoyed interacting with students from different stages of university careers, working on the award has meant I've gained advice from different student networks, and I'm able to grow and develop myself. I also feel less nervous working with those at a more senior level to me and has made me feel confident in myself working in a professional role.

Working for the Spirit of Sussex award has allowed me to explore my evaluation skills and has revealed to me how much I enjoy working on feedback and improving the user experience. Now I would really like for evaluation to be an integral part of the career I do in the future, and without being part of the Spirit of Sussex Award team, I would never have known!



ABBY ALADESURU

Throughout the course of my Spirit of Sussex Award connector role, I have had the opportunity to work in various roles and positions which have tested the boundaries of my skill set. I've been

proud to create content, plan events and support the training and line management of my fellow connectors. One of my most proud and favourite achievements has been a combination of these skills:

1) Taking an active lead for Welcome Week for 2021-22 to plan a 3-week schedule of events and content and support the team in delivery, although this was challenging, I am very proud of the work the team and I produced.

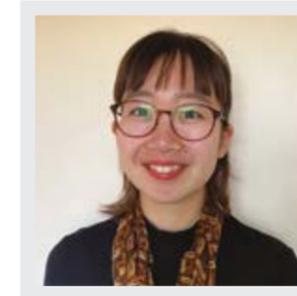
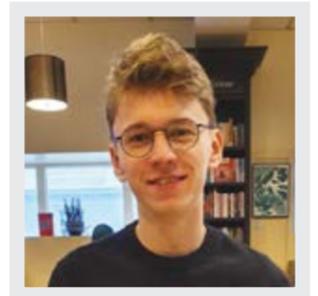
2) Our first in-person SoSA Mixer event in Northfield bar was one of my highlights. Seeing so many students gathered and engaged in the award after a year of lockdown and online events was a delight!

KAMIL CZARNECKI

My favourite milestone working for the Spirit of Sussex Award is, by far, my self-development. It has helped me develop skills to prepare me for my future, showed me how colourful and engaging

a work community can be, let me contribute to the further development of the award, and support other students to show their spirit – but my biggest milestone has been finding mine.

I have worked on co-creating various media projects for the Spirit of Sussex Award, which has let me explore the creative side of myself I had previously learnt to dismiss. Creating meaningful content and communication so that others may walk my path and experience it for themselves is just an added joy, and I cherish my experiences deeply. The friends and colleagues I have made while working as a student connector have also shown me a new appreciation for friendly workspaces, and my manager, Rebecca, has left me plenty of space and support to grow and flourish!

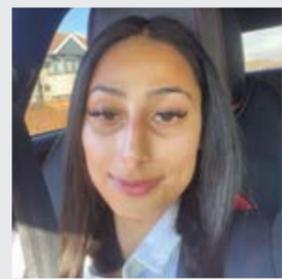


RIKO KUNISUE

Within my role as a Spirit of Sussex Award Student Connector, I have focused on organizing and delivering events, and creating visual content for our social media channel.

I always feel happy to see diverse students enjoy our events. One of the most memorable events that I have led in my connector role, was Hot Tea & Hot Topics, where the attendees discussed social issues over tea and snacks. I was glad that the event became a good opportunity for students who attended to meet new people and learn from each other!

I also developed my skills in digital design through my work on social media content. Previously, I did not have much design experience, but throughout my SoSA role, I have gradually improved, by practicing design tips and trying out new software. I am excited to apply those skills and enhance them further in the future.



SIMRAN RUPAI

Joining the Spirit of Sussex Award team really allowed me to see a healthy working environment. Having worked since I was 16, to finally have a job with a solid and supportive team

has been an invaluable experience. My role has enabled me to improve on a vast range of skills: social media marketing, event planning, increasing engagement, and most importantly, constantly gathering feedback and using the information to build an even better platform.

The connector team is heavily student-oriented, which means we consider the student impact at all stages of the decision-making process. There can be a tendency within the education sector to focus on having the best figures – student numbers, grades, sports teams etc, however, the connector programme is what makes Sussex exceptional, there is a real focus around students, which is reflected through the quality of work produced. Working on the award has made me more reflective of wider, shared goals and the opportunities I've experienced, such as public speaking and event delivery have made me more confident in myself.

WILLIAM HOWLETT



Being a part of the Spirit of Sussex Award team as a graduate connector has been a valuable experience for me. Having previously worked on other connector projects I was able to develop a variety of skills that have helped me to improve my CV and employability. Being a part of the Spirit of Sussex Award team has enabled me to develop even further on a professional level and has allowed me to contribute to projects that have a real impact on the experience of other students.

I am very excited to be contributing and leading on the end-of-year celebration event, for which I will also be attending as an awardee myself! The award has been so valuable to me both as a member of the team and as an award winner, and I believe it has and continues to make a real impact on helping students to develop throughout their time at university and beyond.

THE SPIRIT OF SUSSEX AWARD COLLABORATES ACROSS THE INSTITUTION, AND WE WELCOME FEEDBACK, SHARING OF BEST PRACTICES AND INPUT FROM OUR COMMUNITY. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GET IN TOUCH TO SHARE IDEAS ON HOW WE CAN PROMOTE, DEVELOP OR COLLABORATE FURTHER, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH OUR TEAM.

EMAIL: sosa@sussex.ac.uk
FOLLOW OUR INSTAGRAM: [@sosasussex](https://www.instagram.com/sosasussex)

SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN SHOWING THEIR SPIRIT AND MAKING THEIR MARK!



10. THANK YOU!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in the launch, and continued growth and development of the Spirit of Sussex Award. With very special thanks for contributions from Spirit of Sussex Award student and graduate connectors, past and present.

Thank you to our colleagues in the Connector Programme, Careers and Employability Centre and Student Experience colleagues within Academic Schools and Professional Services. Finally, thank you to members of the Spirit of Sussex Award Steering Group for their continued support in helping us reach our small wins, and our larger achievements.

With the support of creative, innovative and dedicated colleagues we have established a strong foundation in recognising community and local spirit and will continue to celebrate students. We are proud of each awardee and often think of ourselves as a cheerleading squad for every student who logs points! The award will continue to support students to become connected, engaged, entrepreneurial, and creative citizens of the world.

Thank you and all the best,
The Spirit of Sussex Award team

MAKE YOUR MARK

**SPIRIT
OF SUSSEX
AWARD**

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